VIVEKDHAIRYASRAYA

&

THE PUSHTI MARGA

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VIVEKDHAIRYASRAYA

Introduction & Translation

By

N. K. BAMBHANIA
M.A.,LL.B.

AND

THE PUSHTI MARGA

By

SHAH LALLUBHAI P. PAREKH

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INTRODUCTION

Vivekdhairyasraya *and* ***Krishnasraya*** the two small works of shree ***Vallabhacharya,*** one consisting of 17 stanzas and the other of 11, form but one unit. The idea contained in the last line of the first work is taken up in the second and expanded. The line concerned is ***Kalau bhakatyadimarga hi dusadhya iti me matih*** i. e. in this ***Kali*** age the various spiritual paths are very difficult to follow; and the second work commences with the line ***Sarva margeyshu nashteshu kalaw cha khaldharmini*** i.e. when all the spiritual paths have lost their efficacy especially in this Kali age which is full of roguery;' and then proceeds to describe at length the inefficacy of the various spiritual paths. Nevertheless there is profound optimism in the midst of this apparent pessimism. A person should never get disheartened. The Saving Grace of God is always there ready at anybody's back and call. ***Shree Vallabha charya*** concludes his first work with the words ***Evamasrayanam proktam sarvesharm sarvada hitam.*** Herein he speaks of **Asraya** or the doctrine of sole reliance on God and His consequent Saving Grace as open to all at all times. And the refrain of his second work is ***Krishna Eva gatirmama*** wherein it is stated that though none of the spiritual paths can lead a person anywhere, God is always there to extend His helping hand. Herein **Shree Vallabhacharya** simply reiterates the ideas contained in the following well-known stanzas of ***Shreemad Bhagwadgeeta and Shreemad Bhagwat.***

O Arjun, leave every other thing and rely solely on me I myself will absolve you from all sins, don't worry. (Bhag; Geeta 18-66)

O Arjun, by solely relying on me even low-born persons like females, **Vaishyas** and **Shudras** attain to the highest spiritual state. (Bhag.- Geeta 9-32)

My obeisance to that mighty Lord, by mere reliance on whose devotees even, even such low-born persons as the **Kirats Hoons Andhras Pulindas, Punlaks, Abheers, Kanks, Yavan, Khas**

and others, and even other sinful persons get purified. (Bhagwat 2,4,18.)

Coming to the point, it will thus be quite clear that ***Krishnasraya*** is mere continuation of ***Vivekdhairyasraya.***

Vivekdhairyasraya as its name suggests treats of **Vivek** or true wisdom, **Asraya** or sole reliance on God, "Ours is an age where knowledge accumulates and wisdom decays" says Aldous Huxley. What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Albert Einstein has said that science is lame without religion and religon is blind without science. Wisdom and knowledge are like Einstein's science and religion. Wisdom is lame without knowledge and knowledge is blind without wisdom. Knowledge enables a person how to do a thing but never enables him to know whether he should or should not do that thing. The story of the three foolish pundits well illustrates this point. Once they were travelling through a forest, where they happened to see the bones of some dead wild animal. One joined them the second supplied flesh, blood and skin; and the third endowed it with life. The resulting tiger devoured them. They had knowledge but no commonsense or wisdom. Science has equipped man with the most powerful weapons, but has in no way made him wise. For learning wisdom he has to go to a different science, the science of Spirit - **Arjun of Shree Bhagawadgeeta** Was knowledge incarnate. He was the perfect master of the science of war. But did he know what to do ? He was merely groping in darkness. It was only when **Shree Krishna,** wisdom incarnate, came to his help that he could do anything. In short, it is through the co-operation of knowledge and wisdom that something substantial can be achieved. That is why at the end of this ***Shreemad Bhagavatgeeta*** it is asserted that ***"Yatra yogeshvar Krishna yatra Partho dhanurdhara. Tatra Shreernijayo dhootirdhruva nitirmatirmama'*** (18-78) i. e. 'Where Lord **Krishna,** the fountain-head of all wisdom, and *Arjun*, the master of scientific technique, cooperate, there alone are a fixed policy, prosperity, true success, and consequent perfect peace. ***Shree Vallabhacharya*** in this small work teaches us wisdom.

Now, how does wisdom help us? ***Sukhaya dukhmorshaya sanralpa ih karminah*** **(Bhagu. 7. 7. 42)** states that human efforts are directed towards either the removal of pain or acquisition of positive pleasure. But in the first place, these efforts by themselves are seldom pleasant, and secondly, who knows what the outcome of these efforts is ? ***Sukhaya Karmani karoti loko na tvih sukham Vanyadupararnam va: Vindeta; bhuyastaba ev dukham. (Bhag, 3, 5, 2)*** says that people try to be happy, but they become all the more unhappy on that very account. Here it is clearly stated that the outcome of our efforts is just the opposite of what we desire. This being the state of things, it is worthwhile to analyses the situation and to find out if possible its true cause. The human nature is full of desires ***Kammaya evayam purushah (Vrihadaranyak 4.4.5)***, Now, the basic desire of practically all men is that external condition should confirm to their internal conceptions. But this is rarely so. Things are not what we want. Dissatisfied with the things as they are, people try to set them right. But the things remain what they are. If, at times the things, appear to change, the satisfaction is only momentary. New conceptions beset us dargging as in the same vortex. What is the way of escape? ***Shree Vallabhacharya*** suggests that persons should learn to confirm their internal conceptions to external conditions. It is easier for Mohammed to go to mountain then mountain to come to Mohommed. This is Vevak or true wisdom. Never oppose the storm with your puny form. The Christian doctrine of letting God's will be done teaches the same. ***Dhairya*** or infinite patience is a part of this wisdom. But, all this requires a lot of strength. From where are we to derive this strength? For that, turn to God, all-powerful, all-gracious. This is ***Asraya*** or sole reliance on the

Saving Grace of God.

In all this, however, there is one very great danger. Carried to the extreme such doctrines tend to disrupt society. And ***Shree Vallabhacharya*** amply provides against this. He tells us that a person should never slacken his efforts for the betterment of external conditions, simply he should not make his mental peace dependent on the success of these efforts. According to him, further a person should look upon such noble motives as behests of God. Moreover, he asks us not to follow blindly any course of action however reputed it may be: ***Dharm adharmarga darshanam***. First, a person should look to consequences and then start doing things. This will prevent the dreaded disruption.

Reverting to the point, in short, have better motives, look upon them as behests of God, be prepared to face even death for the sake of principles, and rely for all this on the Saving Grace of God This is what ***Shree vallabhacharya*** teaches us in ***Vivekdharyasraya*** and ***Krishnasraya.***

विवेकधैर्ये सततं रक्षणीये तथाश्रय: ॥१/२॥

A person should ever be on his guard that ***Vivek*** or true wisdom, ***Dhairya*** or true patience, and ***Asraya*** or sole reliance on God do not leave him even for a moment. 1/2

विवेकस्तु "हरि: सर्वं निजेच्छात: करिष्यति" ॥१॥

Vivek or true wisdom lies in whole hearted submission to the will of God. 1

Note : A person as an individual has specific wishes. But as is everybody's experience all things do not happen as one wishes. The wise course then is, not to have specific wishes at all, but to have delight in whatever happens of its own accord.

प्रार्थिते वा तत: किं स्यात् स्वाम्यभिप्रायसंशयात् ।
सर्वत्र तस्य सर्वं हि, सर्वसामर्थ्यमेव च ॥२॥

Suppose a person were to ask for something which God does not want to grant him. Then, what is the use of such asking ? Is not the wise course then, not at all to ask for anything ? God in His own right is everywhere the master of everything and has also unlimited powers over it. How every insignificant is a mortal before so mighty a Lord ? 2

अभिमानश्च सन्त्याज्य: स्वाम्यधीनत्वभावनात् ।
विशेषतश्चेदाज्ञा स्यादन्त:करणगोचर: ॥३॥
तदा विशेषगत्यादि भाव्यं भिन्नं तु दैहिकात ॥३१/२॥

A person should constantly remind himself of his utter dependence on God and leave aside all pride. If however, there is some specific command of God, and this is not unlikely as God resides in every heart, then a person may say or do something with apparent pride. On such an occasion, a person should not however, brood over it and worry. He should think of it as due to some outside agency quite distinct from the pride of his worldly position 3½

आपद्गत्यदिकार्येषु हठस्त्याज्यश्च सर्वथा ।
अनाग्रहश्च सर्वत्र धर्माधर्माग्रिदर्शनम् ॥४॥

But a person should see that this pride never persists to the extent of his voluntarily courting disaster or of his becoming obstinate. Moreover, before performing any act reputed to be pious or otherwise, a person as a rule ought to think of its

consequences first 4.

Note : ***Dharmadharmaradar, shanam.*** An act generally reputed to be pious becomes impious if its consequences are bad and an act generally reputed to be impious becomes pious if its consequences are good. ***Shree Vallabhacharya*** here warns people who go on blindly performing acts reputed to be religious even though their consequences are disastrous both to the performers as well as to others.

विवेकोऽयं समाख्यातो धैर्यं तु विनिरूप्यते ॥५॥

Thus have I fully described the nature of ***Vivek*** or true wisdom. Now I am going to do the same with regard to ***Dhairya*** or true patience.

त्रिदु:खसहनं धैर्यमामृते: सर्वत: सदा ।
तक्रवद् देहवद् भाव्यं जडवद् गोपभार्यवत् ॥६॥

True patience consists in always calmly bearing the three-fold pain due to any cause whatsoever. Think of Takra or coagulated milk the butter out of which cannot come out unless it is churned; of one's body which calmly bears all hardships to which it is subjected; of inorganic substances like earth, water and so on; and of the cowherdess who had to pass through a number of vicissitudes and as such had become worry-proof. 6.

Notes : ***Tridukh***= Three-fold pain, i. e. ***Adhidaivik, Adhyatmik,*** and ***Adhibhutik.*** This is the rough traditional classification. Calamities caused *by* invisible forces such as ill stars, angry gods, and so on are ***Adhidaivik*** harm caused by visible creatures like beasts, birds, and so on are ***Adhibhoutik,*** and the rest such as sickness, mental worry, and so on where no definite cause can be assigned are ***Adhyatmik.***

Amriteh: - Till death. Patience must be life-long and not merely occasional. Or, death being the worst calamity, one ought not to give up patience even in the face of death. By adopting this second interpretation, the idea of continuity will be had from the word ***Sada*** and unnecessary repetition will be avoided.

Takravat : Butter is the most valuable part of milk. But it cannot be brought out without churning the milk. The same is the true of souls. Their excellent qualities can come out only if they suffer calamities. "Sweet are the uses of adversity' says Shakespeare.

Dehvat The body bears all the burdens laid on it by the mind. The mind in pursuing its pleasures never thinks of the various hardships the body is subjected to; but the body never objects and willingly follows the mind even to the extent of being killed if but the mind wills so.

Jadvat. Inorganic substances like earth, water, and so on. Every sort of rubbish is thrown on the earth or is washed by means of water. They never object to this. On the contrary, they not only purify the rubbish, but they themselves also remain pure and always at the service of humanity and animal kingdom. Moreover, these inorganic substances are subjected to the most painful processes.

They are heated, are cut up, are either chewed or gulped down, and are even completely digested, i.e their very individuality is destroyed. But they bear all this very calmly.

Thus Shree Vallabhacharya.as Shakespeare has put it, "finds sermons is stones and books in running brooks."

Gopbharyavat. The shortening is metrical. The incident is briefly related in the following stanza :-

हत्वा नृपं पतिमवेक्ष्य भुजङ्गदंष्ट्रं
देशान्तरे विधिवशाद् गणिकास्मि जाता ।
पुत्रं पतिं समधिगम्य चितां प्रविष्टा
शोचामि गोपगृहिणी कथमद्य तक्रम् ॥

Once upon a time a Brahmin and his very beautiful wife with their young male-child were resting under a tree by the roadside. The Brahmin leaving them there had gone to a neighbouring village for alms. In the meantime some king on horseback happened to pass along that road. Being smitten by the beauty of the Brahmin's wife, the king got down, and forcibly seizing and placing her on horseback galloped away at full speed. Thereafter a caravan happened to pass along that very road. Seeing the young beautiful

male-child, the head of the caravan lifted it up, and, having no son of his own, adopted it as one. When the Brahmin returned, he found none; and being aggrieved he became a wandering mendicant. Reaching the king's capital, the Brahmin's wife requested the king not to touch her for some time whereafter, she promised, she would willingly be his faithful queen. The king consented. By chance one day during this period her husband happened to pass by her palace. She recognised him, called him, told him the whole story, and promised to meet him at a certain place after killing the king. After his departure she invited the king to her palace that night, killed him, and fled away. Reaching the appointed place she found her husband dead having been bitten by a snake. Afraid of being caught and subjected to worst tortures she fled away to another land, where for want of a better profession she was forced to the life of a prostitute. By chance, her very son, who by that time had become a handsome strong stripling happened to visit her, had an intercourse with her, and even a heart-to-heart talk with her. During this talk it was discovered that they were mother and son. To expiate this heinous sin they decided to burn themselves alive. But before their pyre took fire she was carried away by a sudden heavy flood and was rescued by a cowherd who made her his wife. After so many vicissitudes she calmly submitted to the lot of a cowherdess. Now, once upon a time she was going to a neighbouring town for selling of waterly remains of coagulated milk after butter is taken out of it. Other cowherdesses were also with her. While they were moving along the road, some rider happened to come upon them at full speed. To save themselves they had to move aside helter-skelter with the butter milk result that their got spilt. All the cowherdesses except her began to abuse the rider; but this one stood calmly as if nothing had happened. On being asked by the rider why she did not worry and remained calm, she narrated to him her whole story concluding it with the remark that the present loss was nothing compared to the previous ones.

The moral of this story, according to ***Shree Vallabhacharya***, is:-

One cannot escape one's fate. The best way is to humbly submit to it. It was fated of this Brahmin woman to get separated from her husband and child and to get defiled by contact with another. She tried to escape from it, but could not. On the contrary, she made her lot worse by making efforts to escape it. Had she accepted the king who abducted her she would have had separation from her husband and child and even defiling contact with one no doubt, but she would have at the same time lived the life of a favourite queen. By not accepting her lot and making strenuous efforts to escape it she had the worst defiling contact and had to leave the life of a poor cowherdess And even after this it was only the meek submission that brought about her mental peace. Why not then have it right from the very beginning?

प्रतीकारो यदृच्छातः सिद्धश्चेन् नाग्रही भवेत्
॥६१/२॥

If, however, by chance, there is a remedy at hand to avert the disaster, a person by all means should employ it. He should never obstinately stick to the attitude of relinquishing all efforts. 6½

Note : ***Shree Vallabhacharya*** does not preach complete relinquishing of efforts. He wants that all reasonable efforts ought to be made. And, according to him, a person should willingly and completely submit to his lot only after all the reasonable efforts have failed. He is an exponent of mental peace, and not of mental and physical inertia.

भार्यादीनां तथान्येषामसतश्चाक्रमं सहेत् ॥७॥

A person should calmly bear the verbal onslaughts of his kith and kin such as his wife, and even of others, although these onslaughts be baseless and unjustified. 7

Note : Verbal onslaughts are the worst disturders of mental peace. Hence this special warning.

स्वयमिन्द्रियकार्याणि कायवाङ्मनसा त्यजेत् ॥७½॥

As far as possible a person should avoid in thought, word, and deed all initiatives. 7½

Note : This does not mean that a person should have no initiatives whatsoever. For ***Visheshatashchedagya Syadontah Karnagocharh.*** does permit initiatives. What *Shree Vallabhacharaya* wants to say here is that persons should learn to distinguish mere whims from deep-seated drives. The latter are a part of nature's design. Nature cooperates with them. Their fulfilment amply contributes to mental peace. As for mere whims, they are quite superficial, quite unsteady. They simply disturb mental peace and achieve nothing substantial.

अशूरेणापि कर्तव्यं स्वस्यासामर्थ्यभावनात् ॥८॥

These lessons about cultivating patience are primarily meant for the brave who are by nature impatient. This is true no doubt. Nevertheless, they are equally meant for the cowardly ones who though outwardly patient are inwardly much more impatient. Through constant self-conciousness of their weakness they should remind themselves of the utter futility of their impatience and try to cultivate patience. 8

Note : Why this special instruction to cowardly persons! As for the brave, they can easily give vent to their anger, which leaves their souls clear, and thus there remains no anger eating up their souls. Their loss through impatience is only out-ward. In their case, the patience is necessary for cultivating self-control and developing soul-strength. But, when cowardly persons resent anything, they are absolutely helpless. There is no way to give vent to their pent up feelings with the result that these pent up feelings continue to corrode their inreriors. This is why ***Shree Vallabhacharya*** had to issue this special instruction.

God makes even impossible possible. Absolute reliance on Him will achieve anything and everything. Having thus dealt with true patience, I now turn to absolute reliance on God. 9

ऐहिके पारलोके च सर्वथा शरणं हरिः ॥९½॥

In matters concerning this life or the next, God is our absolute guide. 9½

दुःखहानौ तथा पापे भये कामाद्यपूरणे ॥१०॥
भक्तद्रोहे भक्त्यभावे भक्तैश्चातिक्रमे कृते ।
अशक्ये वा सुशक्ये वा सर्वथा शरणं हरिः ॥११॥

When a person wishes that a certain calamity afflicting him should come to an end, when he has committed a sin and finds no way to expiate it, when there is a danger, when he sees no way how to get his desires fulfilled, when he has offended a devotee, when he finds himself devoid of any devotion to God, or when devotees have railed at him, let him rely absolutely on God. Let it be very easy to achieve something or let it be the most difficult to do so. the sense of absolute reliance on God should in no case leave him even for a moment. 11

अहङ्कारकृते चैव पोष्यपोषणरक्षणे ।
पोष्यातिक्रमणे चैव तथान्तेवास्यतिक्रमे ॥ १२॥
अलौकिकमनःसिद्धौ सर्वार्थे शरणं हरिः ।
एवं चित्ते सदा भाव्यं वाचा च परिकीर्तयेत् ॥१३॥

When a person has had the feeling of pride on account of the fact that it is he who feeds his dependants who would have otherwise perished, when such dependants offend him, or when his disciples insult him, he should absolutely rely on God who is always ready to mend all matters. Even for attaining to this state of absolute reliance on God, a person should absolutely rely on God. A person should constantly revolve this idea in his mind and even repeat the formula embodying it. 13

अन्यस्य भजनं तत्र स्वतो गमनमेव च ।
प्रार्थना कार्यमात्रेपि ततोन्यत्र विवर्जयेत् ॥ १४॥

A person should never leave this absolute faith in the Almighty God and turn to lesser gods for the fulfilment of his petty wishes, running to their temples and praying every now and then even on a slight pretext. 14

Note : **Shree Vallabhacharya** strongly deprecates this clinging and cajoling mentality of the worldly minded people who have no idea whatsoever of the soul's grandeur, whose hearts are set on transitory worldly gains, who

are completely selfish, are constantly worrying, and are constantly at the mercy of the whims of quack-devotees who in order to gain their own selfish ends play with the fancy of these fools either promising them rich rewards or inspiring false fears in their minds. According to him, a person should have absolute faith in one supreme God, and should always be ready fearlessly to face the worst of calamities for the sake of that singleminded devotion.

अविश्वासो न कर्तव्यः सर्वथा बाधकस्तु सः ।
ब्रह्मास्त्रचातकौ भाव्यौ प्राप्तं सेवेत निर्ममः॥१५॥

A person should never allow his faith to flinch even slightly. Such flinching is always harmful. Let him remember the ***Brahmastra*** episode, wherein all the efficacy of the ***Astra*** was destroyed because of want of faith in it on the part of some ***Rakshas'*** other than ***Indrajeet*** the son of ***Ravan.*** Let him also remember the unflinching faith of the ***Chatak-bird*** which patiently bears the painful sensation of thirst, but never touches any water other than that of the rain falling during the period when the sun is in the ***Swati*** constellation and as a rule gets it because of its unflinching faith. He should enjoy pleasure or bear pain in a spirit of complete detachment. 15

Notes: ***Brahmastrachatkau.***

Brahmastra - Hanuman was sent by Ram in search of ***Seeta*** to ***Lanka***. After finding her there, he began to play mischief by uprooting trees, destroying mansions, and killing *Rakshsas.* Ravan sent forth able Rakshasas either to kill ***Hanuman*** or seize him alive and bind him by means of fetters. The ***Rakshas*** sent forth could do nothing of the sort on the contrary they themselves were killed. Then ***Ravan*** ordered his most valiant son ***Indrajeet***, who employed ***Brahmastra***. ***Hanuman***, out of respect for the deity ***Brahma***, submitted before it, and did nothing whatsoever. But certain foolish ***Rakshas*** bound ***Hanuman*** by means of ropes in order to secure him well thereby. This act of want of faith on their part destroyed the efficacy of the ***Brahamastra.***

Chatak—There is a general belief that a ***Chatak*** bird never touches any water other than that of the rain falling during the period when the sun appears to occupy the region of the sky marked by the ***Swati*** constellation.

यथाकथञ्चित् कार्याणि कुर्यादुच्चावचान्यपि ।
किंवा प्रोक्तेन बहुना शरणं भावयेद्धरिम् ॥१६॥

Go on doing somehow or other, as need arises, acts either high or low. What more shall I say ? Rely absolutely on God. 16

एवमाश्रयणं प्रोक्तं सर्वेषां सर्वदा हितम् ।
कलौ भक्त्यादिमार्गाहो दुःसाध्या इति मे मतिः
॥१७॥

Thus have I recommended the doctrine of absolute reliance on God, whereby all benefit at all times. For the paths such as ***Bhakti*** and others are, in my opinion, difficult to follow in this ***Kali*** age. 17

N. K. BAMBHANIA
M. A. LL.B

THE PUSHTI MARGA

OR

The path of acquiring Grace of the Almighty, otherwise called the Nirguna-Bhakti Marga or the path of Pure Love towards the Almighty

Preached by

SHRIMAD VALLABHACHARYA

Shrimad Vallabhacharya, one of the foremost and the greatest philosophers of India, the illustrious advocate of the Brahma-vad or the Shuddhadwait (the pure non-dualistic) doctrine of philosophy, and one of the greatest devotees of the Almighty was the preacher of the Pushtimarga or the path of acquiring Grace of the Almighty, otherwise called the Nirgun Bhakti Marga or the Path of Pure Love towards the Almightly.

Brahmavad

He was born at Champaranya in A.D. 1479. Having studied the Vedas and other Shastras at an early age, he established the doctrine of Brahmavad or Shuddhadwait (pure non-dualistic) doctrine of philosophy in the court of Krishna Dev, the de facto ruler of the powerful empire of Vidyanagar (Vijaynagar) on the southern Bank of the Tungabhadra in south of India, in the presence of the foremost and the most learned Acharyas and Pandits of the time [1] Thereupon Krishna Dev, with the concurrence of the Acharyas and scholars assembled there, conferred upon him the title of Acharya and Maha Prabhuji (lit. very powerful). As he spent the latter part of his life in writing philosophical works at Adel and Charnadri (Charnat) in the neighbourhood of this place (Allahabad).[2]

Pushti Marga

The path of devotion or Bhakati Preached by Vallabhacharyes is technically called the Pushti-Marga. In the expression Pushti Marga, the word marga means way or path and the word Pushtimeans grace of the Almighty. It does

notmean nourishment of the physical body as some people erroneously think it to mean. Thus the expression Pushti Marga literally means the path of acquiring Grace of the Almighty.

As Grace is acqired by those who follow the Nirgun Bhakti Marga and Nirgun Bhakti Marga connote the same meaning Vallabhacharya defines Bhakti as follow :

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1. At this time his age did not exceed fourteen years.

2. In Adel (near Allahabad) and Charanadri (near Benares) there are his Betheks (seats) still in existence. Thousands of pilgrims visit the same every year.

Bhakti

The most enduring love (towards the Almighty) surpassing all, based on the knowledge of His greatness is called Bhakti or devotion. Mukti or salvation is attained by it and in no other way.

As the three Gunas or qualities born of Prakriti or Maya (a power of the Almighty) viz. Tamas, Rajas and Sattva have influence over the thought, feelings and actions of all, Bhakti or devotion which is but àn attitude of the heart, assumes four different forms viz. Tamasik, Rajasik. Sattwik and Nirgun (free from the influence of the three Gunas)

Tamasik Bhakti

The devotion of the person, who is influenced by anger, who entertains a sense of separateness and whose object is to inflict pain on another, or to cheat another, or to satisfy his envy, is called Tamasik Bhakti.

Rajasik Bhakti

That devotion which is impelled by the desire of obtaining worldly objects, that which has for its object worldly fame, that which has for its object worldly, power, and that which implies a sense of separateness, is called Rajasik devotion.

Sattvik Bhakti

That devotion which has for its objects the destruction of sins, that which has for its objects the pleasing of God by offering to Him all actions, and that which is practised with a sense of separateness with the object of securing fruits of actions is called Sattwik Bhakti.

Nirgun Bhakti

That uninterrruped and continuous motion of the mind, towards Him who resides in the hearts of all free from the impediments created by the Vedas and Smritis; like the flow of the Ganges, which makes its way through mountains etc, and goes to the sea, is called Nirgun Bhakti.

This devotion or Bhakti must be without any object in view and without any desire of fruit. It should be accompanied by Love with a view to serve Him.

It should be directed towards the Purushottam (lit. the highest Person), who resides in the hearts of all but not towards His incarnations.

This Nirgun Bhakti has been established by Shrimad Vallabhacharya.

The world with its Gods

According to the doctrine of Brahmavad, it is the Almighty from whom the world with its Gods, Devas etc. comes into existence, who is to be loved, served and worshipped. When the Almighty wishes to be many, the world with its Gods, Devas and other entities come into existence. The Gods etc. are of the nature of the different powers of the Almighty.

Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva

There are three chief powers of the Almighty which are generally called by the name of Gods. They are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Brahma works as His creative power, Vishnu as His preserving power and Shiva as His power of destruction. All these Gods have been working under the will of the Almighty. These three Gods preside over the three Gunas, Brahma presides over the Rajas, Vishnu over Sattva and Shiva over the Tamas. They are more-or less under the influence of the three Gunas. They are therefore called Sagun Gods.

Devas

Below these three Gods, there are a number of entities higher than man. They are called Devas, such as Indra' Varuna, Sun etc. Devas preside over the several departments of nature They are all subordinate to the Almighty.

Purushottam

Just as an ordinary servant regards his immediate superior to be all powerful and serves him faithfully, there are people who think the lower entities or elements such as Indra, Varuna, Sun, Fire etc. as all powerful, and worship them. There are others who worship Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. But in the Pushti Marga, the highest element is called Purushottam and in the Vedas and the Geeta is regarded as the worthiest to be loved worshipped an served.

Nirguna

It is the Almighty Purushottam alone who is all pervading, all powerful and omniscient. Although the three Gunas have influence over all the Gods the elementals and all departments of Nature, they none over Him. He is therefore called **Nirguna.**†

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† The word Nirgun as used in the Vedas etc' does not mean without attributes, as some people suppose it to mean. It means that which is beyond the influence of the three Gunas born of Maya or Prakriti viz. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. If the word really means without attributes, the Almighty would have no attributes. That which has no attributes can be of no use in any of the worlds. Besides this, the several attributes of the Almighty mentioned in the scriptures would be out of place. The Shvetashwater Upanishad describes the Almighty as the one God who is concealed in all being, who pervades all, who is the inner soul of all beings; the ruler of all actions, who dwells in all being, the witness, who is mere knowledge and without qualities. As the Vedas and Shastras mention numerous attributes of the Almighty, it would be highly absured to say that Nirgun means without attributes or qualities. In fact there is nothing in the world which has no attribuies. The word Nirgun therefore means, that which is beyond the influence of the three Gunas born of Prakriti, or that which possesses no qualities possessed by objects born of Prakriti.

It may be observed that the word Nirgun has been interpreted in this sense by Shri Shankaracharya, while commenting on Geeta 13-13 where he says: —

निर्गुण सत्वरजस्त्मांसि गुणस्तैर्वर्जिते

Shri Ramanujacharya while commenting on the same shloka also says:—

तथा स्वभावतः सत्त्वादि गुण रहितम्

It is indeed neither sinful nor useless to worship the inferior Devas or entities, for those who worship them, go to them, while those who worship the Almighty go to the Almighty. The only difference between the two is, that the fruits which the worshippers of the Devas get are finite or temporary, while the fruits obtained by the worshippers of the Almighty are infinite and everlasting.

As the Devas are a portion of the Almighty, the Geeta says, that even the devotees of the other Devas, who worship full of faith, also worship the Almighty, though contrary to the ancient rule.

Brahma Puran

The Brahma Puran says :— By worshipping the other Devas with mind, actions and speech, one acquires devotion to the Fire. When the Fire is pleased by the devotion, devotion to the Sun is acquired. When the Sun is pleased, devotion to the Mahadev is acquired. On the Mahadev being pleased, devotion to the Almighty is acquired. It is by the devotion to the Almighty that a man gets riches and salvation in the life-time.

The worship of Almighty

Thus though the devotion to the lower Devas eventually leads to devotion to the Almighty, in the Pushti Marga the highest Deva is the Almighty who is concealed in all beings, who is the inner soul of all, who is omniscient etc. is loved, served and worshipped. The other Devas are worshipped by way of formality on marriage and other occasions only.

No dualism

Though Bhakti or devotion generally presupposes two entities, in the Pushti Marga it is not tainted by dualism the

Almighty to be loved is the soul of the person loving.

In the Pushti Marga the Almighty is generally known by the name of Krishna. The meaning of the word is as follows : —

Krishna

The word ***Krish*** connotes power, the word na connotes bliss. The combination of the two means Krishna Parmatma. He is called Brahman in the Upanishads, Parmatma in the Smritis and Bhagvan in Shreemad Bhagvat.

Fundamental Rules

The fundamental rules to be observed by those who wish to follow the Pushti Marga are as follows:—

(1) One should follow the Rules appropriate to his status and station (वर्ण and आश्रम) in life according to his ability.

(2) He should refrain from doing that which is contrary to his duty.

(3) He should keep the steeds of senses under control. These three things should not be forsaken even out of curiosity.

First step

The first step to be taken by the neophyte who wishes to follow the Pushti Marga is Atma-Nivedan, self-surrender or renunciation of the self.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says:-

The Brahman is verily the Lord of all beings, the King of all beings. As all spokes are fastened in the nave and the circumference of the wheel, thus also all beings, all gods, all worlds, all organs, all souls are fastened in that Soul or Brahman.

Atma Nivedan

This Shruti shows the relation between man and the Almighty. As all creatures have their source. in the Almighty, they should resign themselves and everything that belongs to them to Him. Renunciation of the self is necessarily followed by spiritual growth. †

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† As we forget our personal self, we attach less importance to personalities, personal things and personal feeling. We begin to look upon ourselves, not as being permanent, unchanging and unchangeable entities, standing isolated among other isolated entities, and being separated from them by impenetrable shells, but as parts of an infinite power, which embraces the universe, and whose powers are concentrated and brought to a ***focus*** in the bodies which we temporarily inhabit, into which bodies continually flow, and from which are incessantly radiating the rays of an infinite sphere of light, whose circumference is endless and whose centre is everywhere. (Vide Magic White and Black by Franz Hartmann M. D. p. 36).

The essence of Christian holiness is that we should be at the absolute disposal ot God' Sickness and the Gospel by Otto Stockmayor (.P. 6.)

1Dr. Hartmayan says:—To escape the effect of the cause which has been created, he who created the cause must try to transform himselt into another man. if his lower principles have led him into mistakes, they will suffer, but if he succee in assimilating his nature with his higher principles and thereby changes himself into a being of a different character, their character, their suffering will not be of the greatest importance to him. Such is the only rational philosophy of the forgiveness of sins. Vide Magic white and Black p. 147).

Schopenhauner says :— In consequence of the action of Grace, the entire being of man becomes remodelled, so to say a new man. (In W. and B. p. 254)

The Atma Nivedan. (self-renunciation or self-surrender) is made in favour of the Almighty, but not in favour of the Acharya or any living being. It is however generally made at the instance of an Acharya and in the presence of the diety,

Brahma Sambandh

The Atma-Nivedan (self renunciation) creates or rather revives the memory of the connection with the Almighty. This connection is technically called Brahma Sambandh (connection with the Almighty), The connection being formed or the memory thereof being revived, all the five kinds of sins mentioned in the scripture, cease to have the force of impeding the spiritual growth of the Bhakta or devotee.

There is nothing strange in this.

Second Step

The next step, which the devotee is required to take in the Pushti Marga is to render service to the Almighty. Services as defined by Vallabhacharya, means the engrossment of the mind in the Almighty, or possession of the consciousness (of the devotee) by the Almighty, or inclination of the heart towards the Almighty. Service (सेवा) is of three kinds, viz (1) Physical, .2) Material and (3) Mental. The two Former are intended for the neophytes and the third for the far advanced. By performing the physical and material services one loses worldly misery, obtains knowledge of the Brahman and becomes qualified to perform the mental service.

As the object of service is to keep the mind fully engrossed in the Almighty, it is usually performed in relation to an image † of the Almighty. The devotee is expected to regard the image as the Almighty and to think that every service rendered to the image is rendered to the Almighty.*

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† Owing to some such reasons the Holy Bible. says: —Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law (मर्यादा) but under grace, (पुष्टि)

Being then made free from Sins. We become the servants of righteousness. (The Epistle of Paul to the Romans 6 p. 232).

John Stuart Mill in his Three Essays on Religions says (Vide p. 90):—- Better religions, not to drive sinners to despair, dwell so think himself irrevocably condemned.

Butler in his Analogy of Religion, speaking on the Mercy of God says'— For we have daily instances of such mercy in the general conduct of Nature, compassion provided for misery medicine for diseases, friends against enemies.

* It is indeed true that there are people who do not approve of idolatry. They say that the belief in external gods strengthens the illusions of self. This is not likely to take place in case of the Seva or service prescribed by Vallabhacharaya, since the man who performs the service is acuainted with the nature of the greatness of the Almighty. At the time of self-renunciation, he regards the image as the Almighty simply because, He being, omnipresent, is also present in the image.

The next objection advanced against idolworship is that it induces men to ask for favours which they do not deserve in preference to other men that deserve them. This objection does not also apply to the Seva or service enjoined by Vallabhacharya, since a true follower of the Pushti Marga is not allowed to ask for any favours, since the opinion of the Aimighty is not known, since He is everywhere all powerful to do every thing, accordig to His own will.

To one who has resigned himself with all his possessions, prayers for acquisition of personal desires are out of place.

† It is also argued that idol-worship helps to establish the aristocracy of priests, and to put the false priest upon a throne, from which the true God has been excluded Where to serve the Almighty is the prime duty of every man, whether a priest or a layman, there is no danger of creating the aristocracy of priest. The service is to be rendered by oneself personally, but not through priest.

It is also argued that he who has grown to live above the illusions of form and recognizes the existence of true God in his heart, needs no illusions to guide his attention. He carries the temple of eternal God in his own Soul and worships it without ceremonies and rites by perpetual adoration (Magic White and Black by Franz Hartmann M. D.). This argument partakes of the nature of petitio principii. Our Acharya allows mental service to be performed by those who have grown to live above the illusions of form and who recognize the existence of true God in their hearts. But what will be the fate of those who are unable to do this and who want some tangible thing before their minds, if idolatry or image worship be not allowed.Without showing the photograph or picture of the King Emperor to a child who has never seen him, how would you put into his mind the idea of what the King Emperor is like? We fail to see any objection to the idol being used as a means to an end.

Thomas Carlyle in his Sartor Resartus says:–

In the symbol proper, there is ever, more or less distinctly and directly same embodiment and revelation of the Infinite. The Infinite is made to blend with the Finite, to stand visible and as it were attainable there. By symbols accordingly, is man guided, made happy, made wretched. He everywhere finds himself encom passed with symbols. The Universe is but one vast symbol of God (p. 260).

All forms are only apparitions. They all represent, invisible truths. Before the pure light of reason all illusions will disappear in the end and

the truth appear; not hidden in forms, but in the sublime splendour of its purity before ihe wondering gaze of the spiritually awakened man (Magic White and Black p, 94).

The object of forms is to represent principles and as long as a form is known to be a true representation of principle, the principle gives it life. (Id. 140).

If a man know the truth, it matters little by what name he may call it, or under what form he may attempt to express that which can not be made into form. The Buddhist who offers flowers and fruits at the shrine of Buddha, is as near the truth as the Christian who sees in the picture of Jesus of Nazareth the representation of his highest ideal. (Id. p. 243).

Idol means that which has a material form. It is used as a symbol of a thing whether material or immaterial. The use of symbols is made in all departments of life. A picture, a photograph, a map, a sign, a form etc are but the idols of different things. Just as all pecuniary dealings are likely to be stopped in the absence of the use of coins, so all worldly dealings are also likely to be stopped in the absence of the use of coins, so all Worldly dealings are also likely to be stopped with the discontinuance of symbols. Are not the alphabets the different idols or symbols of sounds? Are not words the different forms of thoughts and feelings ? The different coins are but idols of the different thoughts about price or valuation. Money-orders cheques, bills etc. are but different symbols of the same kind of thoughts. Map of the earth houses etc. are but the idols of the things which they represent. Pictures, photos etc. fall under the same category. When idols or symbols are allowed to be used in all departments of life, there is no reason why they should not be used in relation to the Almighty. If you can honour the King Emperor by offering honours to his photo, why .should you not be able to do the same to the Almighty by worshipping his idol.

It is indeed auspicious that educated people have begun to understand the utility of Seva. Ramkrishna Sevashram at Kunkhal, the Servants of India Society at Poona, and the Seva Sadan at Bombay are a proof of this. Though the object of these institution is to serve the people, who are creatures of God the service rendered to them for some time is likely to enable them to understand the utility of serving the Almighty. It should be remembered that service rendered to the Almighty has a tendency to rebound on the people who are his own creatures. †

By performing service of the Almighty, the practice of concentration or meditation is cultivated and the mind becomes engrossed in him. The utility of the service can be best realized by performing it, in an intelligent manner for some time, whether physically, materially or mentally.

Shrimad Bhagwat says:— The water poured at the root of a tree nourishes its trunk, branches and sub-branches, so does food given to the vital airs nourishes the senses. The same is the case with the service of the Almighty, that is to say by serving the Almighty the whole universe is served.

Offering everything to God before making use of it

The next step which the disciple is to take is to offer every thing to the Almighty before making use of it, Whether the thing consists of food, clothes, thoughts, actions etc.

The sins committed before Atma- Nivedan or self-renunciation are wiped out by self-renunciation. In order to prevent new faults or sins being engendered, it is necessary that all things used by the disciple should be offered to the Almighty.

The Chhandogya Upanishad says:- By the purity of his aliment he becomes purified in his nature. By the purification of his nature, he verily gets memory, and by the attainment of memory all the attachments of his body are severed. (Chh. 7-26-2, p. 617)

As the Almighty is the highest purifying element, everything offered to Him loses its impurity and becomes pure, whether it consists of materials of food, thoughts, actions etc.

The practice of offering everything to the Almighty enables a man to part with his egoism, and to remember His greatness.

The Geeta says:—He, who acteth, placing all actions in the eternal, abandoning attachment is unaffected by sin as lotus leaf by the waters.

Whatsoever thou doest whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest,

whatsoever thou givest-what soever thou doest of austerity, .Oh Kaunteya. do thou that as an offering unto Me.

Thus shall thou be liberated from the bonds of actions, yielding good and evil fruits; thyself harmonized by the yoga of renunciation, thou shalt come unto Me who set free.

Life's Centre

Sin displaces our life's centre and gives a wrong direction to our whole being. Instead of God, our own self becomes the centre around which every thing within us revolves. In order to change this and to make God the centre of our life, it is necessary to serve Him and to dedicate or offer to Him all our actions etc.

Shri Vallabhacharya says that, when the seed of devotion (Love) sown by self-renunciation takes root, it grows up by means of non-attachment, hearing and singing the glory of the Almighty. In order to make the seed strong,it is necessary to stay at home, to follow the duties belonging to one's own status and station in iife, and to love Krishna, and to worship Him with service, hearing etc.

Shrawan

Thus when the mind is not actually engaged in serving the Almighty, one is to have recourse to Shrawan Keertan and Smaran. Shrawan means, hearing of such of the attributes, accounts and narratives ot the actions (Lilas) of the Almighty as are likely to withdraw the mind from worldly matters and fix it in the Almighty. By hearing these, the attributes of the Almighty enter the heart through the ears, and having churned sins or vices that lie there, expell them through Keertan (singing) by way of mouth. If this pratice is continued for some time, one's heart becomes purified.

The object ot Shrawan is to determine the power and meaning of the world and sentence which describe the Almighty.

The narratives about the Almighty embody accounts of his six principle attributes, viz (1) Aishwarya (Supremacy, Omnipotence, Omnipresence etc.) (2) Virya (heroism, prowess virility), (3) Yasha (glory), (4) Shree (plenty, royalty, splendour), (5) Gyan (knowledge) and (6) Vairagya (absence of worldly desires and appetites). These attributes are capable of effecting salvation and are of the nature of bliss. The narratives of the Almighty are therefore called Kathamrita (nectar of narratives). This Kathamrit is real Amrit (nectar), for it drives away death. It produces non attachment or Vairagya and destroy sins. As the actions or Leelas of the Almighty pervade all worlds, the Kathamrita (nectar of narratives) also pervades all worlds. Though the Almighty perceptibly manifests as in Avtar, and then disappears, but His Kathamrita always remains visible.

Keertan or Singing the glory of the Almighty.

Keertan means to know or to communicate to another the power and meaning of the words referring to the Almighty.

The glory of the Almighty should be sung after knowing His greatness. It should not be sung with a worldly mind.

Just as a heap of rubbish is carried away by flood, so are sins or vices destroyed or carried away by hearing and singing the glory of the Almighty.

The attributes of the Almighty are such as to raise to eminence those who sing them. As they are of the nature of power, they themselves act without the aid of any extraneous motion or action.

Smaran

Smaran or remembering the name of the Almighty. According to the doctrine of Brahmavad, the names and forms of the Almighty are not unreal, for they have been made by Himself.

As the names and forms of the Almighty are of the nature of the Vedas and their meaning, they purify all ; all expiatory acts are inferior to the meditation of the names of the Almighty since they have close connection with His forms.

The word Shri-(lit. Laxmi) is for the sake of ornamentation prefixed to the names of the Almighty.

Impressions of the attributes of the Almighty are made on the heart by remembering His greatness and His names.

The names of the Almighty should be uttered after knowing their real meaning and with pure feelings.

NIRODH

The chief object of Seva (service), Shrawan (hearing), Keertan (singing) and Smaran (remembering) is the attainment of Nirodh. Nirodh means strong attachment to the Almighty, accompanied by suppression of worldly thoughts.

There are three stages of Nirodh, viz. (1) Prema (2) Asakti and (3) Vyasan.

The Three Stages of Nirodh

Prema means love towards the Almighty. It is engendered by the acquisition of the knowledge of his greatness. When this love increases in depth and extent, the love of worldly objects fades away and strong attachment to the Almighty accompanied by oblivion of the worldly objects and desires take place. This state of the mind is called Asakti. Vyasan is that state in which the mind becomes completely occupied by thoughts about the Almighty, to the absolute exclusion of worldly thoughts. When the mind is engrossed by the attributes of the Almighty, one does not feel any pain or agony arising out of the world or out of separation from desired objects, but enjoys bliss like the Almighty.

When the attributes of the Almighty enter the body of the devotee, their effect is to produce permanent non-attachment to worldly objects. Owing to the contact of bliss arising out of the attributes of the Almighty, one does not experience pain at any time. This state precedes what is called Jiwan Mukti or salvation of one's own life-time.

Mukti and Ashraya

The steps next to Nirodh are Mukti (emancipation) and Ashraya (dependence).

When complete Nirodh is attained, one lives in the Brahman. Such a person obtains emancipation, for the Chhandogya Upanishad says :– One who abides in Brahman obtains immortality.

If such a person has not become merged in the Almighty, he has to depend on Him alone, for He alone is indestructible and the great destruction Maha Pralaya does not effect Him. This dependence on Him is called Ashraya.

Seva (Service) and Bhakti (Devotion)

Seva and Bhakti

As the object of Seva or service and Shrawan Keertan and Smaran is the same viz. to keep the mind engaged in the Almighty. Shrawan, Keertan and Smaran are considered to be a part of Seva. As the object of Bhakti (devotion) is to love the Almighty, Seva and Bhakti are used in the same sense.

As the root Bhaj is used in the sense of serving, the intelligent use the word Seva (service) in the sense of Devotion (Bhakti), which admits of a great many means.

Fruits of Seva

According to the doctrine of Pushti Marga. fruits of all actions and of service are dependent on the Grace of the Almighty. When He is pleased with the service, the following fruits are generally obtained, viz.

(1) The acquisition of supernatural powers. This includes all kinds of Siddhis or miracular powers.

(2) Sayujya. This means either Union or association with the Almighty.

(3) Acquisition of a spiritual body fit to serve the Almighty and to carry out his orders in Vaikunth and other worlds.

The chief characteristic of the Pusti Marga are as follows :-

Chief Characteristics

(1) In this Marga, only one God called Krishna, Parabrahma, Parmatma or Bhagwan is loved, served and worshipped,

(2) In this Marga precedence has not been given to rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Scriptures, but prominence is given to Love and Love alone towards the Almighty.

(3) In this Marga complete faith in the Omnipresence and Grace of the Almighty is enjoined. One is not expected to pray for favours.

(4) The acquisition of means prescribed in the Maryada Marga productive of trouble and anguish. As the service enjoined by the Pushti Marga is performed with Love, with such means as may be had without much trouble, it is productive of happiness and bliss.

(5) In the Pushti Marga, Bhakti or devotion begins with, continues and ends in Love Supreme.

(6) In the Maryada Marga, the Almighty follows the precepts of the Scriptures in giving fruits. In the Pushti Marga He is free to bestow any fruits and He generally follows the wishes of the devotee who is independent, as in the case of Damodar Leelah.

The Nature of Pushti or Grace

Pushti

The Grace of the Almighty Krishna is of the nature of favour. It annihilates the effects of Time, Karmas (actions) and Svabhav (innate nature).

Superiority of the Pushti Marga or the Nirgun Bhakti Marga, over the paths or Karma knowledge etc.

Superiority of the Pusti Marga

(i) Yagnas and other rites mentioned in the scriptures can be effectually performed only when Desh (place), Kala (time), Dravya (materials), Mantra (formula), Karta (doer), and Karma (action), these six things are obtainable in their pure state. As it is impossible to find them in a pure state in this iron (Kali) age, the Yagnas etc. do not produce the desired effects.

(2) The Path of knowledge is long, tedious and impracticable in this age, since complete non-attachment which is productive of knowledge is difficult of attainment. The Geeta says that the man full of wisdom cometh unto me at the close of many births besides this one who follows the path of knowledge has the danger of incurring egoism Knowledge when acquired makes the mind pure and enables a man to distinguish between right and wrong. With the assistance of knowledge, man can safely cross over the ocean of life, but in the absence of love or Bhakti, he can not reach God Who dwells far away from the shores of the ocean of life.

(3) In the paths of Karma and knowledge one has to depend upon his own strength in the Bhakti Marga, owing to self-renunciation, one becomes entitled to draw upon the infinite powers of the Almighty.

(4) Dharma or religion is generally divided into two classes viz (i) that which implies action and (2) that which implies inaction. The former is called Pravritti Marga and the latter Nivritti Marga. The former consists of yagnas and their actions. The latter consists of knowledge, penances, austerity etc. Those actions in which materials are required, imply injury to others. Those in which penances and austerity are essential as in the case of knowledge etc. are injurious to one's self. God is the soul of all creatures. It then follows that, that religion which enjoins unbounded compassion towards all, that which is neither injurious to one self nor to others, and that which inculcates intense love for God is the highest and the best Dharma. No Dharma other than the Pushti Marga or the Nirgun Bhakti Marga can lay claim to this.

(5) If there is ever possibility of the universal acceptance of one single religion and one single philosphy, they would be those preached by Shrimad Vallabhacharya. It was the cosmopolitan nature of his teachings, that they found favour with Hindus and

Mahomedans alike.

Vallabhacharya says:- To love the Almighty heartily is the only religion of all. There is no other Dharma at any other time.

General Observations

(i) It is the characteristic of Nirodh (concentration , that the mind should, by all means,be wholly occupied in matters relating to the Almighty.

(2) Those who attach their minds to the Almighty speedily approach Him.

(3) The Nirodh concentration of the devotee should be of such a nature, that the Nirodh (concentration) of the Almighty on the devotee may be produced By the conjunction of the two, the Nirodh of the devotee becomes firm. It does not become firm in any other way.

(4) In devotion (Bhakti) Sanskaras (impressions prescribed by the Shastras) are not essential. Devotion (Bhakti) is engendered by love and other means.

(5) Devotion forms the vital airs of the Shastric births, knowledge, religious observances etc. In its absence these (births etc) are useless.

(6) Mere semblance or imitation of Service (Seva) does not produce any fruit.

(7) Thoughts about the Almighty are not likely to enter the mind, which is distracted or vitiated by worldly thoughts and desires.

Shrimad Vallabhacharya is the first and the only Acharya who has systematically shown that Nirgun Bhakti is the natural religion of all creatures, that it is quite independent of the paths of Karma (actions) and Gyan (knowledge) that Upasana is quite different from it, that the Nirgun Bhakti (intense Love towards the Almighty) is consistent with the doctrine of Shuddhadwait or Brahmavad and that is quite in accordance with the Vedas (including Upanishads), the Geeta, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagvat Puran which form the Prasthan Chatushtaya.

Vallabacharya says :-

Meaning of the Shastras

To acquire Grace of the Almighty by His Nirgun Bhakti is the real meaning of the precepts of all the Vedas, the Ramayanas, the Maha Bharat, Punchratra and other Shastras including Tattva Sutras. This meaning has been graciously determined by the Lord for all times.

In the Geeta the Lord says :-

Though ever performing all actions, taking refuge in **Me**, by My Grace, he obtaineth the eternal indestructible abode. (xvii - 56)

Thinking on **Me,** thou shalt overcome all obstacles by My Grace,

For this reason Vallabhacharya says the three paths viz Karma, Gyana and Bhakti lead to the acquisition of fruit if they are followed acording to one's qualifications. At present in this Kali age all qualifications have disappeared. Hence if Krishna is served with love, Kali will give fruit.

The Best Path

This path (the Pushti Marga or the Nirgun Bhakti Marga) is said to be the best of all paths, for there is no danger of falling, since the Almighty always protects His devotees.

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પ્રાપ્તિસ્થાન :

૧) **ડો. મહેન્દ્ર એચ. મહેતા,**
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૩) **શ્રી. સુનિલભાઈ ટી. જાગીરદાર**
૪૪, સંગમ સોસાયટી, પાર્લે પોઈન્ટની નજીક,
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૪) **ડો. પીયૂષ પરીખ,** એમ. બી. બી. એસ.
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ટે. નં. ૦૨૬૪૨ - ૨૪૦૩૩૭

૫) **શ્રીમતી કલ્પનાબેન જનકભાઈ શાહ**
૩૫, લાડ સોસાયટી, વસ્ત્રાપુર,
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૬) **શ્રી. જીતેન્દ્રભાઈ પરીખ**
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૭) **શ્રી. નરેન્દ્રભાઈ શાંતિલાલ શાહ**
૧૧૧, એન્ટરપ્રાઈઝ એપાર્ટમેન્ટ,
ફોરજેટ હીલ, તારદેવ, મુંબઈ - ૪૦૦ ૦૩૬.
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